

MUSEUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

NOTES ON A SMALL COLLECTION OF BIRDS MADE  
BY MR. E. H. SAUNDERS, AT ROEBURNE,  
NORTH-WESTERN, AUSTRALIA.

BY A. J. NORTH, F.L.S.

Roeburne, of which Cossack is the port, is the centre of the pearling industry in North-western Australia. It is situated near the mouth of the Harding River, and is about 800 miles in a direct line from Perth, and 500 miles from Derby, King's Sound. The adjacent country is rich in minerals; gold was accidentally discovered there early last year by a boy, who picking up a stone to throw at a bird, found it to be closely veined with gold. Inland the country has been mostly devoted to pastoral purposes, the exact locality where this collection was made being Karratha Station, 36 miles N.W. of Roeburne. With one or two exceptions only the larger species have been collected, and although a new locality, only two species are recorded as typical of Western Australia, viz., *Platycercus zonarius*, Shaw, common in the south, and *Dacelo cervina*, Gould, already reported by Dr. Ramsay, from Derby. The rest are common in New South Wales and other parts of Australia, and merely show the range of the species. Mr. Saunders has attached a note to each specimen, giving the date when collected, sex, and the colours of those parts liable to fade.

CIRCUS ASSIMILIS, *Jardine and Selby (C. jardinii, GOULD)*.

Allied Harrier.

A semi-adult ♂ shot May 3rd, 1889. Found over the greater portion of Australia.

*HALIAETUS LEUCOGASTER*, *Gmelin*. White-bellied Sea-eagle.

A young ♂ shot near a lagoon, May 15th.

Mr. Saunders attached the following note to this specimen. "Contents of stomach, eels. The reason I believed the contents of the stomach to be eels, was because the bird's feet were covered with mud when shot. The lagoon called "Marie" is a large one and eels are numerous. I could not discern the heads of the eels taken from stomach."

*HALIASTUR SPHENURUS*, *Vieillot*. Whistling Eagle.

A single specimen of this bird, a young male. With the exception of the extreme south this species is universally dispersed over the Continent of Australia.

*ELANUS AXILLARIS*, *Latham*. Black-shouldered Kite.

An adult ♀, similar in every respect to our New South Wales examples.

*HIERACIDEA ORIENTALIS*, *Schlegel*. Brown Hawk.

A single specimen, not quite adult male, shot May 2nd at Karratha Station. Similar in every respect to specimens from the eastern coast.

*TINNUNCULUS CENCHROIDES*, *Vig. & Horsf.* Nankeen Kestrel.

Adult specimens, ♂ and ♀, similar in tints of plumage and admeasurements to New South Wales examples.

*MEROPS ORNATUS*, *Latham*. Bee-eater.

An adult ♂ specimen, shot April 29th at Karratha Station. This bird is universally distributed over the whole of Australia.

*DACELO CERVINA*, *Gould*. Fawn-breasted Kingfisher.

Two adult specimens obtained, ♂ and ♀, of this northern and north-western form of *D. leachii*. In both of these species the deep rich blue of the upper surface of the two central tail feathers of the male will at once serve to distinguish it from the female, which in striking contrast has the central tail feathers of a rich brown conspicuously barred with black.

HALCYON SANCTUS, *Vig. & Horsf.* Sacred Kingfisher.

One adult and one semi-adult ♂. Similar to the New South Wales examples. Found all over Australia.

CENTROPUS PHASIANUS, *Latham.* Pheasant-Coucal.

A single adult ♂ specimen shot May 1st at Karratha Station. This species is precisely similar to that obtained on the Clarence and Richmond Rivers, some specimens varying more or less in the deeper tints of the under surface of the body.

CALOPSITTACUS NOVÆ-HOLLANDIÆ, *Gmelin.* Cockatoo-Parrakeet.

Two males, not quite adult.

PLATYCERCUS ZONARIUS, *Shaw.* Banded Parrakeet.

Two semi-adult ♀ specimens. This bird is the only typical Western Australian species in the collection. Although very common in portions of Southern and Western Australia, neither this nor any other species of *Platycercus* has been recorded in Dr. Ramsay's List of Birds from Derby.

ÆGIALITIS NIGRIFRONS, *Cuvier.* Black-fronted Dotterel.

Two adult specimens, ♂ and ♀, shot May 3rd. With the exception of the extreme north this bird is universally dispersed over the whole of Australia.

ARDEA NOVÆ-HOLLANDIÆ, *Latham.* White-fronted Heron.

An adult ♀ similar in every respect to New South Wales examples. With the exception of the Gulf district and Cape York this bird is found all over Australia.

TRIBONYX VENTRALIS, *Gould.* Black-tailed Tribonyx.

Three specimens shot April 23rd, two adult males and one female, similar in tints of plumage and admeasurements to those obtained from other portions of the Australian Continent.

FULICA AUSTRALIS, *Gould.* Australian Coot.

A ♂ shot April 24th. After careful comparison with specimens from New South Wales and Victoria, I can find no distinction between them.

PLOTUS NOVÆ-HOLLANDIÆ, *Gould*. New Holland Darter.

An adult ♂ shot April 29th. This bird seems to be universally dispersed over the whole of Australia. Dr. Ramsay has recorded both this and the two following species from Derby, North-western Australia (P.L.S.N.S.W. Vol. II. 2nd Series, p. 173) but through an oversight they have been omitted from his "Tabular List of the Birds of Australia."

GRACULUS MELANOLEUCUS, *Vieillot*. Little Cormorant.

One specimen, a female, shot May 17th at "Marie," a lagoon 36 miles S.W. of Roeburne. Similar to those procured from other portions of Australia and Tasmania.

GRACULUS STICTOCEPHALUS, *Bonaparte*. Little Black Cormorant.

Two adult specimens, ♂ and ♀, shot May 10th at Karratha Station. With the exception of the extreme north, this species has been obtained from every part of Australia.